



EMANCIPATION AND ENFRANCHISEMENT.

THE WORK OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

— Address of Prof. John M. Langston, at Chillicothe, Ohio.

Mr. President and fellow-citizens of Ohio: Without preliminary remark I enter at once upon the performance of that duty which your kind invitation to address you on this occasion enjoins. If my theme seems trite, I am brought to its discussion by the fact that in your State you are entering upon an important political campaign, connected with which the most interesting issues are to be considered, and as to which every citizen should be so well informed that he can cast his vote intelligently as well as conscientiously.

Coming into power in 1861, the Republican party found the South practically in rebellion against the National authority, claiming that slavery was not only to be perpetuated in the States in which it existed by municipal regulation, but to be extended contrary to law, and even at the endangerment and hazard of American liberty itself, into free territory.

The slave oligarchy demanded, insisted, that this all be done, and that, too, after concession had been made even to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the passage of the Fugitive Slave law of 1850, and the decision of the Dredd-Scott case, in which Chief Justice Taney went so far as to hold as a matter of law that the African race, "whether emancipated or not, had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and government might choose to grant;" and, in a social and political point of view, "no rights white men were bound to respect."

Concessions of such character, so fundamental and radical, ought to have satisfied the exactions even of the slave power, since its exactions in fact could be supported by no sanction in the history, law or usage of the country, but were in conflict with the genius and organic law of the Republic, the teachings of the fathers and founders of it, slave-holding and non-slaveholding.

Jefferson taught: "The hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. This enterprise is for the young—for those who can follow it up and bear it through to its consummation. It shall have my prayers, and these are the only weapons of an old man. What execrations should the statesman be loaded with, who, permitting one-half of the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms the one into despots and the other into enemies, destroying the morals of one part and the *armor pectoris* of the other! And can the liberties of a nation be thought secured when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of people that their liberties are the gift of God? Indeed, I tremble for my countrymen when I reflect that God is just, and that justice can not sleep forever. The Almighty has no attribute that can take sides with us in such a contest."

Franklin, in his celebrated Memorial, as president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, addressed to Congress, uses this language:

"Your memorialists particularly engaged in attending to the distresses arising from slavery believe it to be their indispensable duty to pre-

sent this subject to your notice. They have observed with real satisfaction that many important and salutary powers are vested in you for promoting the welfare and securing the blessings of liberty to the people of the United States; and as they conceive that these blessings ought cheerfully to be administered, *without distinction of color*, to all descriptions of people, so they indulge themselves in the pleasing expectation that nothing which can be done for the relief of the unhappy objects of their care will be omitted or delayed."

Madison, the father of the Constitution, "thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man." And he said:

"I object to the word slave appearing in the Constitution, which, I trust, is to be the charter of freedom to unborn millions; nor would I willingly perpetuate the memory of the fact that slavery ever existed in our country. It is a great evil, and, under the providence of God, I look forward to some scheme of emancipation which shall free us from it. Do not, therefore, let us appear as if we regarded it perpetual by using in our free Constitution an odious word opposed to every sentiment of liberty."

In dwelling upon the question of abolishing the slave trade, he said: "The dictates of humanity, the principles of the people, the national safety and happiness, and prudent policy require it of us. It is to be hoped that by expressing a national disapprobation of the trade we may destroy it and save our country from reproaches and our posterity from the imbecility ever attendant on a country filled with slaves."

The concessions named, however, seemed only to make the slave power more audacious in its exactions till the Union itself was to be dissolved, and the perpetuity of free institutions endangered, if full and entire concession of its demands was not made. Opposition thereto, as indicated in the election of Abraham Lincoln, furnished the occasion for demonstration of hostile feelings, attitude and acts on its part, and in less than sixty days after his inauguration as President of the United States the guns of the rebellion were discharged upon Sumter. Brought into power under such circumstances, the first imperative duty of the Republican party was the protection of the Union, threatened and assailed; the maintenance of the Federal Government, whose authority and power were deduced; the salvation of American liberty itself, sinking, well nigh lost through the insidious and malignant attacks of those who, tarried, not even at its overthrow, to accomplish their nefarious designs.

At a large expenditure of treasure, the heaviest sacrifice of life, through courage, wisdom and skill unmatched in the annals of national endeavor, the Republican party performed this duty in the most triumphant manner. Indeed, not excepting that which records our Revolutionary triumphs, the most interesting and brilliant chapter of our national history is that which chronicles the devotion, the

ward. It is here, in the struggle and the blood of the Union forces in the fearful and bloody struggle to save the Union, the National Government and our free institutions.

In this struggle the American slave, through the agency of the party, was emancipated, and his emancipation was through its agency guaranteed by constitutional regulation. Subsequently by the same agency and method the ex-slave was made citizen, given the suffrage and became eligible to official position.

Whether civil liberty necessity brought him freedom, or political necessity brought him emancipation, it is not necessary to our present purpose to consider. It answers to know that it was through the action of the Republican party that he was made free, whatever the motive moving to this action; and through its action he was invested with those rights, privileges and immunities which distinguish American citizenship. Whether prompted by military or political necessity, the action of the party is none the less wise, nor its results the less acceptable.

This action brings the colored American into peculiar relations with and obligations to the Republican party, and these relations and obligations are made the more continuous and binding by the fact that the Republican party protects him in the possession of the liberties and rights which it has conferred.

At the first view it would seem that gratitude alone might hold the emancipated and enfranchised class to perpetual support of the party which has done such great things for it. Such considerations, however, may not determine one's duty in this regard. They will, and very justly may, influence the class benefited, and, all other things being equal, as between parties, might very properly control its action. Gratitude is always esteemed an individual virtue. Why not approve, commend and admire classes, even nations? So we do, to be governed by mere gratitude, however, in determining one's political course of action might prove pernicious. In times of high political excitement, when reforms of manifold, industrial or other character are demanded, should a large class of the people, influenced by such feelings, by uniting themselves to a party opposing such reforms, give it control of the Government, and power to hinder or prevent national progress, the result would certainly be accounted disadvantageous—it might be disastrous.

Under such circumstances gratitude becomes a blind impulse, without reason or forecast, heedless devotion to party without appreciation of the requirements of patriotism and the duties and obligations it imposes. Such impulse, such heedless devotion, finds its source in that confusion of idea which leads one to give that place in his affections to his party which alone belongs to the Government; which leads one to hold the latter as servant to the former, to be sustained at all hazards, since it is deemed by him to be of chief and primal importance.

Government is first in necessity and importance, as it is in dignity, and party is only of value as a means through which the great uses of government may be accomplished.

We are too constantly determining our political duty and how party purposes may be gained through the Government, but how the Government may be sustained through the party, its powers duly exercised and the objects of its action thereby attained. Gratitude should be exercised rather to the Govern-

ment, to the Government, not to the party, and represented, to be sure, by a party—the party showing itself true and wise. Special care must be taken here that we accept not the shadow for the substance, the unsubstantial for the real.

The sentiment to be impressed and inculcated in one rising as one party, is the kind of patriotic devotion, and is strikingly presented in the words of Brutus to Cassius, when, as the play, he is made to say:

"What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be ought to the general good,
Set honor in one eye and death in the other,
And I will look on both of them alike,
For so let the gods use me, as I live
The name of honor more than mine is dearth."

Let such be the patriotic devotion of all Americans to our Government. And any no devotion to party, however induced, detracts this higher and nobler devotion.

But while the colored American cultivates natural and proper gratitude towards the Republican party, he is held to loyalty and allegiance thereto by other and more mighty considerations of the general good. Were he convinced that his own welfare were promoted by its agency, mainly or solely, while the general advancement of his fellow citizens was not sustained and subserved, or that this general advancement through its agency was hindered and retarded, he would not, it is to be hoped, through selfish motives and in peril of the common good, give it his suffrage and support.

In the interest of our common country, to maintain the authority and power of our common Government, the colored American supports, by influence and vote, the National Republican party; and these general considerations have, as they ought, greater weight with him—tend more largely to determine his political relations and conduct than any other.

Of course, in reaching such determination and pursuing the line of conduct indicated, he is not unmindful of his own interest, the best and surest method of securing and supporting them. His interests, however, are not considered and treated by him as differing in any important sense from those of his fellow-citizens generally. They do not, in his estimation, therefore, require any special political organization for their peculiar support.

His liberty is maintained by those usual methods adopted to sustain the liberty of the people generally. His rights are so identical with those of others, and so entirely inseparable, in legal definition and safeguard, that in general no unusual enactment or protection is required. Whatever may have been true with regard to his status anterior to his emancipation, when made free, and admitted to the polity, he lost any peculiar identity he possessed, by reason of race or the institution by which he was enslaved, and became an American citizen—invested with all those rights, privileges, immunities and powers, and held to the performance of all those duties pertaining to and distinguishing such citizenship.

His former condition of servitude, descent, race peculiarities he may not forget, nor seek to obliterate; but his citizenship and its qualities, the measure and limit of his rights and powers, his responsibilities and immunities, the mode and necessity of their protection and support are the same and not separable from those of his fellow countrymen. The tie of allegiance, therefore, which binds all others to the Government binds him; and in obedience

to that law which makes all citizens debtors to the government which tears them protection, he dedicates his life and property, and pledges his sacred honor to the maintenance of the government. His loyalty, the consecration of his life, his property and sacred honor to the welfare of the Republic is abundantly attested by our national history, as the same records the triumphs of our arms in the wars of the Revolution, of 1812 and of the late rebellion, when brother met brother, the brave, fiery and chivalric South met the courageous, undaunted and unconquerable North, and forever were settled in blood—the commingled blood of white and black, freeman and slave—the questions whether man can hold property in man within the jurisdiction and upon the soil of our country, and whether citizenship under our law can, in any sense, be qualified by considerations of complexion and race.

Henceforth we are all freemen and citizens, with the same law, as the same heavenly light, covering the whole face of our country, reaching the humblest son and daughter of our population, of whatever complexion or lineage. If any single political party is to be given the honor, awarded the praise for this work, this moral triumph, whether we consider it in its bloody and fearful aspect of war, or its more pleasing, though difficult and perplexing one of legal reconstruction, none can be insensible to the claim of the Republican party.

Abraham Lincoln, the first Chief Magistrate called to administer the Government upon its vote, will always be remembered, his name cherished with fondness and veneration, as the emancipator of our country, the martyr, whose sacred blood saved American liberty itself. While those who composed his cabinet, Seward, Chase, Stanton, Bates and their associates, distinguished for the largest professional and general accomplishments, will be chiefly remembered in the ages to come as the counselors of this prince and savior of the nation.

The second Chief Magistrate placed in power by this party, at present the incumbent of the chair of State, passing from military to civil life—from the command of the matchless army whose solemn but gallant march against the cohorts of the rebellion was felt wherever civilization is known—has displayed no less courage, skill and prudence in the management of the Government than in the conduct of the army. In the field his behavior challenged and won the admiration of his countrymen and mankind. His success in the administration of the Government, the glory which he has achieved as a judicious and wise Executive, may not transcend, but they are certainly not less beautiful and enduring than the success and glory which distinguish him as a great military chieftain.

Washington, Lincoln and Grant are associated in the American mind by no accident or unnatural and arbitrary principle. Their names are those which reflect and mirror more grandly than any others our national life and character. A trio of Americans, not unlike as to many of the qualities which compose their character—self-reliant, unostentatious, without selfishness, great and good, tried servants of the people, their names are written in the topmost parts of the scroll of fame, and shine in an effulgence of glory which shall know no eclipse.

But the party which gave the nation Lincoln and Grant as its Chief Executive also gave it able and efficient men in the Cabinet, the legislative and judicial departments of the Govern-

ment. So that during the past fourteen years, while our national trial has been severe—almost beyond parallel in any nation's history—our national legislation, the decisions of our national judiciary, the conduct of our internal and international affairs, have been characterized by wisdom and moderation.

It is such exhibition of forecast and efficiency on the part of the Republican party, displayed in the interests of all classes and all sections of the country, which leads the colored American to adhere so unyieldingly to it; because its policy, as he conceives, is the one, and the only one, which, legitimately put in practice, will conserve the general good; because the other great national party, the Democratic, wedded to the false ideas of the past, or slow to announce its acceptance of the new and true ideas of the present, or, if attempting such announcement, making it in doubtful and uncertain terms, with a practice which resolves the doubt in accordance with the old ideas, gives him no place, indeed practically forbids him position within its ranks. If this be true, as far as party relations and connections are concerned, there is but a single course left to the intelligent colored voter, whether he be selfish or patriotic, moved and controlled by considerations which have to do with his own condition, or which concern the whole people and the entire country. He must vote with the Republican party.

It is to be hoped that the day is not distant when the great Democratic party, so distinguished by great names which illustrate its past history and present leadership, so many just and considerate principles, will define and announce its views with such particularity and clearness, in such comprehensiveness and harmony with our new age of freedom and equal rights, that the colored voter, embracing the views of that party and desiring affiliation therewith, may not feel himself denied such privilege, but may find himself, according to his choice, at ease in such new party relations as now in the Republican party. Then his party relations will be defined by no color lines, and this is a consummation to be desired. We are in the way of party changes and readjustments, and the relations indicated may be established at an early day in individual cases.

Let the Democratic party show itself worthy of our support, inviting it by his action, and we will show ourselves, as heretofore, capable of making that choice in the determination of our party relations, without reference to our color and our peculiar interests, which, in our judgment, will conduce most largely to the common good, each one of us acting for himself. To-day no intelligent and considerate person, interested in his welfare, his wise use of the ballot, can do otherwise than commend the colored American for voting the Republican ticket.

His duty as to the election soon to occur in your State must be apparent; and here, on this occasion, I can do little more than express his approval of the platform and nominations made by your State Republican party.

The candidates of the party are men of integrity and capability. Governor Hayes, especially, in past administrations of the Government has shown himself efficient and reliable, and in his elections demonstrated his great popularity. The party presenting a declaration of sentiments comprehensive and clear, commanding his assent and approval, the duty of the colored voter, as a Republican, is plain, and will be pursued by him with

intelligence and cheerfulness. The declaration of sentiments enunciates certain principles which particularly commend themselves to his judgment. Among them may be specially mentioned and emphasized the following:

"The States are one as a nation, and all citizens are equal under the laws and entitled to their fullest protection."

The doctrine herein embodied is that upon which the rebellion was opposed, and in the light of it the action of the Republican party with regard thereto must ever stand in history supported and defended. Separate and independent for special purposes of local and municipal significance, the States of our Union, immense in resources, abundant in natural and artificial wealth, diversified and strong in population, intellectual and moral power, educational and Christian institutions, constitute a matchless nation; one, in its organic law, the palladium and shield of our freedom, one in its popular and republican government, the priceless gift of our fathers, sustained and perpetuated by the best blood of sire and son; one, in its lofty destiny of glory, transcending that of all the nations of the past, however grand their achievements in arts or arms.

In the next place he accepts as sound the doctrine that "that policy of finance should be steadily pursued which, without unnecessary shock to business or trade, will ultimately equalize the purchasing capacity of the coin and paper dollar." This sentiment commands our assent, for we believe that business and trade in their delicate relations with currency cannot be wisely adjusted or improved by any system of inflation or forced and unnatural economic arrangement. What we need is a general revival of business, the infusion of new life and vigor into trade, the wise recognition and application of the old principles of economy implied in demand and supply, and, in due time and through natural business methods, with confidence restored—trade the meanwhile improving throughout its ten thousand department—money, already abundant, will be freely circulated and reach standard value and purchasing capacity. But these ends can be accomplished only by a gradual and easy contraction of our paper currency replaced by coin. This requires judicial and economical management of our domestic and national affairs.

Again: "We stand by free education, our public school system, the taxation of all for its support, and no division of the school fund." In our opinion the free common schools, supported by public tax, where the poorest and richest child of the State can find the instruction indispensable to success in ordinary life and the discharge of the political duty imposed by American citizenship, without money and without price even, is an institution of such necessity and value that we record with gladness our approbation of this doctrine. The common school, with its doors wide open to all, to which all are invited and welcomed, is indeed the nursery of freedom, virtue and intelligence. Others, more advanced in learning, the possessors of larger advantages of wealth and culture, may discover small appreciation of our system of free schools. The voter of African descent, however, holds the common school of inestimable value to him and his children, and as he grows in knowledge and a clearer and fuller conception of its worth, he will be but the more thoroughly confirmed in his present conviction.

He indorses with his whole soul, prompted by his native democratic instincts, sustained by a well considered judgment, formed in view of his conception of the fitness of things and his knowledge of the experience of other nations, the sentiment that "under our republican system of government there should be no connection, direct or indirect, between Church and State; and we oppose all legislation in the interest of any particular sect." All union of Church and State, however constituted or in whatever manner supported, is anti-American, adverse in principle and practice to our Government, and not to be tolerated in any sense or degree. An independent Church in an independent country, fostered in no wise by the Government, but sustained by its membership through individual and voluntary contributions, cherishing Christian faith and inculcating sound morality, may prove, nay, must prove, a power of incalculable good to the community. In the establishment and support of such Church any class of our countrymen, whatever their ecclesiastical name or relations, has our sincere and cordial sympathy. But against any union of Church and State, toward which we have discovered latterly a tendency which gives us no little anxiety, we protest and shall vote.

True it is that "a grateful people can never cease to remember the services of our soldiers and sailors, and it is due to them that liberality and generosity should obtain in the adjustment of pay and bounty."

Were any other opinion held, or any other policy advocated with regard to this subject, our ingratitude, our want of due appreciation of manly and heroic self-sacrifice, patriotism and devotion, even unto death, exhibited by the American soldier and sailor at every trying hour in our nation's history, would astound the civilized world, and the condemnation of our conduct would be universal and positive. Indeed, let large liberality, whole-hearted generosity be cultivated in the adjustment of pay and bounty to our soldiers and sailors! Nothing less will satisfy the loyal heart of our fellow-citizens.

The demand that "the public domain shall be scrupulously reserved for occupancy by actual settlers" finds a deep and intelligent appreciation in the judgment of the landless colored voter, who long since, through a sad experience and a profitable observation, has concluded that land is the chief desideratum of those who, beginning life in poverty after centuries of slavery, are determined to cultivate such things as distinguished, well ordered, civilized existence. He regards land as the lasting foundation on which he may build, as that without which no people can rise rapidly or firmly in fortune and name. Land is the basis of individual and national wealth, and largely individual and national happiness. Let him, then, who will become an actual settler have upon the easy conditions prescribed a home on the unoccupied lands of the Government; and let there be no disposal of such lands to the inconvenience and injury of such actual settler. One cannot but hope that the landless of all classes will soon come to value slightly the offer of land by the Government, and our overcrowded cities be relieved by large numbers who may seek a competent living, it may be a fortune, upon the lands thus offered.

In thus retreating particularly to six specific points in the declaration of sentiments, as announced by the late State Republican convention, it is not to be understood that the de-

claration is not indorsed in its entirety; and I would dwell at length, and with particularity, upon each distinct point contained therein, and with greater fullness of discussion, were it not that I weary your patience. In too much haste and imperfection of comment, I have referred to the sentiments named; and yet I would not close this part of my address without special allusion to the closing paragraph of the declaration, in which these terse and truthful words are found:

"The distinguished success of his administration, which, to the fame of the patriot and soldier, has added that of the capable and judicious statesman, entitles President Grant to the gratitude of his countrymen."

No citizen of our country expresses this gratitude with greater cheerfulness, or more satisfaction than the colored American, who recognizes the President as his benefactor in a special and large sense, while none will hold his name in more tender remembrance.

It will be perceived, from what I have already said, that I hold that considerations of the common good, maintained through its agency, which bind the white voter to the Republican party, or lead him to change his party relations and co-operate with another, do, and should, in the main, determine the conduct of the colored voter. Should the Republican party ever prove false, in policy or principle, to the highest good of the Republic, influenced by corrupt leaders or erroneous doctrines, the duty of the colored voter to abandon and leave it would be as imperative and obligatory as that of his other fellow-citizens.

Our relations to this party are those which spring from political conviction, the result of an intelligent apprehension of our duty as American voters. If through this party we have been emancipated and enfranchised, protection of life and limb accorded us, it is because in seeking to secure the largest good of the nation, and in its efforts in that behalf, our freedom and elevation have been accomplished. Grateful for all this, we find therein no consideration of obligation binding us in any special manner or degree.

This party seeks the conservation of the general good. Fourteen years of administration of the State and National Government, during the most eventful period of our history, demonstrates the sincerity of its purpose and its power. It is the duty of all the colored citizen no more than the white, through influence and vote to sustain it in this work. The Republican party is not, then, a black man's party. It was not organized solely, nor even mainly, in his interest. It makes no pledges to care for his welfare beyond that of any or all others. Having introduced him, in accordance with law, into the American body politic, it gives him a common and equal, but no peculiar or special care. Equal rights and equal protection in their enjoyment is his guaranty to all. To this end it pledges its power.

But what of "the new departure?" For since the 5th of last month, when Frederick Douglass and myself addressed a meeting of our colored fellow-citizens at Hillsdale, near Washington City, denouncing upon the conduct of certain individuals and associations, advising the people with regard thereto, and when a new declaration of independence was submitted and adopted, we have read much in certain political journals and heard divers expressions which indicate that some of our friends feel that there is to be a general exodus of the colored people, North and South, from the Republican party; and

besides, within a very few days, we have had sent to many of us an elaborate and lengthy document "On the Future of the Colored Man in the South," written by ex-Governor Scott, of South Carolina, formerly a resident of Ohio, in which we are advised in a sort of fraternal, yet more of a patronizing spirit of our political duty and danger. The words of this ex-Governor, formerly an ardent Republican, have to us a strange sound. It is not the clear, inspiring voice of disinterestedness, the assuring utterance of judicious statesmanship, the bugle blast of that leadership which commands and controls the hearts and judgments of the people.

His words are rather those of disappointed and despairing ambition, bemoaning a fruitless political past, in anxious longing for a future more propitious. The ex-Governor advises as follows: "With the past and the present, as I have presented them before you, what is the duty of the colored people of the South in the future? I would say, in answer, that whatever is to your interest is unquestionably your duty. The question, therefore, is what is your interest? I hold that your true interest is to hold aloof from all political parties. You have little to hope or expect from a union with any political party, any further than its own interest can be subserved by affiliating with you. With this uncertainty as to their support of your interest and the absolute certainty of the opposition of every politician who believes that he can succeed in his political ambition without your aid, and that he can make more by opposing than by supporting you, my advice to you is, to maintain an independent position. If you quietly stand by and see those combinations made by which you are to be sold out, you will make a fatal mistake. If you are to become the subject of barter among political parties, my advice to you is to become a party to the sale yourselves. You can make better terms with your former masters than can the old-time abolitionists, for if they make the sale you gain nothing by it in the way of political power, but if you yourselves enter into a combination you can reasonably hope to secure some share of political power and influence for yourselves and your posterity. Do not tie yourselves to any party which will be certain to sacrifice you whenever it has accomplished its own purpose; but say to all parties in the future that you will support men instead of parties—that you will support the men in whose honor you can trust, and who will guarantee the largest representation for your people, and in whose guarantee you can put the greatest trust for the protection of your rights as American citizens. This course will cause men of all parties to seek your support and influence. They will meet your people with a feeling of liberality, and will concede to you such a representation as will be compatible with good government."

"I advise this policy because I believe that it is for your best interests, and also for the best interests of the country. If you pursue a different course, if you unite your political fortunes with any party, and that party is defeated, you can have no reason to hope that the party which you oppose will concede anything on the high moral ground of justice to your race. Recent events make it highly probable that great changes are likely soon to occur, not only in the administration of many of the State governments, but in the administration of the National Government itself." * * *

Governor Scott may be assured—first, that the colored American will attempt no inde-

pendent political organ, and then, placing his vote to the Democratic party upon the terms suggested by him; nor, in the second place, is it possible to play upon his fears in such manner as to secure him into the Democratic party for the sake of gaining success when defeat overtakes the Republican party. Whatever others may do, whatever may be their course, as yet the colored American finds no just cause for putting any other course than that adopted heretofore, and to which he has so consistently adhered.

Individuals, prominent in position and in the confidence of the party, resolutions, calling themselves Christians and claiming special regard for a category added to the Republican party by profession and earnest veneration of party fealty, asking and receiving constantly Government aid through its agency, no less than the charity of wealthy and liberal friends of the negro members of the party, may one after another deceive, even traduce and abuse us. We still discriminate between such individuals, associations and the party itself, which, in the main, has been altogether just and true to us, and which has shown itself wise and efficient in the conduct of National and State affairs.

On the 10th of last April the American Missionary Association, a benevolent society which has hitherto done no inconsiderable service to the colored American, held a meeting composed of its leading secretaries and some half dozen teachers and preachers, at Atlanta, Ga., to consider, according to announcement, four propositions concerning the condition of the Southern blacks. The propositions are presented in the following order and language:

"1. The attitude of the whites in the South in regard to the education of the negro.

"2. The condition and prospects of the blacks as to culture and improvement.

"3. The results of experience as to the best methods of promoting the educational work.

"4. The results of experience as to church work."

These propositions were submitted to the teachers and preachers, as I am informed, in advance, and the meeting was opened by the most eloquent secretary of the association, who reminds his co-laborers that the North is the great begging field of the association, and what is now needed is bottom-facts, those which will move the North. Its enthusiastic liberality displayed since the war, as the records of the treasury of this society must show, of late has been waning.

This condition of things must be overcome. To reach the same object, the same secretary within a few weeks reproduced his address under the startling title "The Country Still in Danger."

Though the influence of this meeting and the cunning manipulations of this society, the columns of the *Christian Union* and the *New York Independent* have been filled with the most remarkable statements as to the moral, religious and educational condition of our emancipated classes, especially those in the Gulf States. These statements are indorsed, too, as well as inspired by the association, for they are reproduced by it with favorable comment in its monthly for June, 1875. In the "International Review" for September last is to be found an article, written by E. T. Winkler, D. D., of Georgia, entitled "The Negroes in the Gulf States." Mr. Winkler, among other things, makes these statements with regard to negroes:

"In dealing with the ballot box, the negro has a guide. When he is in the jury box he has none. Should the case submitted to him touch his political or social prejudices in any way, his verdict may be prognosticated, whatever the law or the evidence may chance to be. If one of the same race is tried for an offense against a white man, the dusky juror stands by his color.

"If one of the advocates employed is of his politics, the juror stands by his party. If the conflict concerns two negroes, the solicitor who has the last speech wins the victory. This, indeed, is so well understood that the negroes in such an emergency prefer to be tried by white men. If the case involves the computation of accounts, on the principle of equity, the juror is too bewildered to make anything out of the affair. Hence lawyers prefer to plead such cases before a judge in chambers, or to settle them by compromise or arbitration. The colored juror is a failure. He knows but little of the principles of justice and the system of law, and cares less. But not only by his caprices and partialities has the colored juryman interrupted the processes of justice, his verdicts are also influenced by his peculiar code of morals. In his estimation the two capital crimes are murder and witchcraft, the latter being the more reprehensible. Theft, perjury and adultery are minor if not venial offenses, they are assigned to the category of indiscretions and pardonable weaknesses. Some suppose that they have been condemned by the scriptural requirements that we must bear one another's burdens."

"Of the number of these offenses which are steadily on the increase, the public records afford us no adequate idea. Comparatively few ever come before the courts at all. Perjury, for example, is so general that the solicitors themselves pass it by. The colored witness has no sense of the sanctity of an oath. On the contrary, to testify to the truth when it would injure a friend, he esteems as an act of treachery." * * * * *

"The negroes here, as in Africa, are adepts in stealing. A planter who is most considerate to his servants and who enjoys great popularity with them, assures the writer that he dares not take two negroes together into the storehouse where he keeps his supplies, being sure that while one is engaging his attention the other will be robbing him. Cotton and corn are stolen in large quantities from the fields, usually at night, and sold at the cross-road shops, called 'dead-falls,' depositories for plunder, which the law will not, and the neighbors cannot, suppress." * * * * *

"The subject of the sexual relations is too delicate to admit of a free report. We confine our statements to a fact or two. There is little regard for personal purity, and little conception of the life-long union of mutual hearts. A distinguished Southern minister was asked to perform a marriage service by a freedman. At the time appointed the groom, who was a favorite servant in a planter's household, and who had more than the average intelligence of his race, presented himself with a woman on either arm, and proposed that the minister should marry him to both. The reason of the refusal the firm could not appreciate. If he was willing and the women were willing, he could not see why anybody else had the right to object. Hadn't freedom come in?" * * *

Are these statements of Mr. Winkler false? There is no difference as to the testimony offered with regard to this subject by those who are well informed, free from prejudice, and

without a sense of debt to accomplish. What say you, then, of the following resolutions of the *Independence* of May 6, 1875, endorsed, as stated, by the American Missionary Association, presented under the title, "The Great Need of the South." The following are the statements, numbered for my own convenience:

1. "The frightful fact stares us in the face on every side that the great bulk of the negroes in the Gulf States have no education, no religion and no conscience. They have churches in abundance, excited singing and shouting, but no religion in the sense in which we use the word. We mean no abatement of our words. The Gulf States are filled with colored Baptist and Methodist churches in which drunkenness, theft and whore-bom are no bars to acceptable membership and communion. We have in our own land—namely on heathen shores, but in these United States—millions of citizens, Protestants we call them, whose character is as little affected by their lack of religion as that of the Sicilian bandits, who murder a traveler with a prayer to the Virgin!

2. "Those who are trying to Christianize the negroes of the South see this most clearly, and we most earnestly wish that every Christian in our land could see the evil and the necessity of correcting it. There has just been held in Atlanta, Georgia, a convention of the missionaries and teachers working for the American Missionary Association. It was desired to get the opinion of the best-informed men as to the true condition and needs of the negroes over the South. There were representatives from nearly every portion of the South, except Virginia, where we are glad to say the whites are laboring reasonably well for the elevation of their colored citizens. The laborers came from Tennessee, from South Carolina, from all the Gulf States, to tell what they had seen and what they felt to be the need of the hour."

"A correspondent writes: 'For three nights and two days, of ten hours' session each day, did these missionaries pour forth their knowledge of this great, strange mission-field. I could liken it to nothing but a river, deep and broad and foul, with occasional sweet and clear tributaries emptied into it. They were all exhorted to tell the bottom truth of their experience and opinions as to the Southern situation, and hence the turbid stream. Every heart was full and overflowing with the burden of the great work to be done.'

3. "Ten years of free-bom has only begun to break through at a few points into the terrible moral and intellectual darkness. Gross darkness and the lowest forms of vice and sin are well nigh universal, while few, blessed with exotic missionary schools and churches, are working in morals and general culture, the many, without these helps, taking advantage of the large liberty freedom brought, are going backward. The hardships of slavery drive the people to God, while the swarms of illiterate freedmen turn to indulgence. Having little assistance from any source, they become an easy prey to temptation. Their religion does not protect them. The doctrines of Christianity come to the heathen as something new and fresh, and for this reason have an immense added power to reform the heathen and reclaim the people. The novelty alone is startling. But among the freedmen we have no such help. The story of the cross is an old story to them. The cross and their vices have lived together in their thoughts and hearts for generations, and it is next to impossible to dislodge either. They practice their religion and vices together,

the one about as much as the other. If they had never heard of the wonderful doctrine of the Christian religion, there would be more a power than now to overthrow their inherited vices."

4. "Does this picture, drawn by the most competent and most sympathetic of all observers, seem black? It is very black, and were hopeless if we could not believe that the hearts of Christian people of the North will be opened to do vastly more than they now do to plant at the South a Christianity that will include in reality. We must treat the mass of Southern colored churches as hideous travesties of Christianity, and overthrow and replace them. They must be reformed from without by planting true churches, whose chief test shall be obedience to the ten commandments. The conference at Atlanta agreed that the negro does not need college education, but that the work of the valued institutions at the South must for a long time to come be mainly that of fitting common school teachers and giving theological instruction."

These and such statements are false and without foundation in fact. They are cruel slanders of an insolent and confiding, stringing and comparatively helpless people. A people who, as a class, have sold, with themselves, faithless and unreliable, nor in the use of the ballot and the sword, nor in the discharge of those duties which are enjoined upon the citizen, nor in the observances of those goodly offices imposed by the law of neighborhood. To treat these statements as otherwise than false is to concede that two hundred and forty-five years of contact with civilizing agencies in house, business and field, in the midst of not in the enjoyment of free institutions whose influences reach, even at distant points, the oppressed and degraded of all tongues and nationalities, elevating man in spirit, has proved, in the case of the black man, utterly unavailing. His life for these centuries was, it is true, that of the slave, outrageous and degraded beyond description, or even conception; yet here as elsewhere, "God restrains the wrath of man and makes the remainder of it to praise Him."

To believe these statements is to count the thousand schools, churches, Sabbath-schools and benevolent organizations found among the colored people North and South, the conventions held among them from time to time, of State and national character, of no moral power and influence. It is to declare their bishops, ministers, doctors, lawyers, teachers and leaders base and of vile character, their influence pernicious and deadly. It is true to hold the religious and Christian sense which leads them to found schools and churches, to organize and support benevolent associations, among themselves a mere impulse, no settled conviction and judgment, begetting the spirit of sacrifice and Christian liberality as well as Christian life. It is to deny to the negro, even a partial knowledge and an imperfect appreciation of that ordinary morality which conduces so largely to the good of any people, which is indispensable to good order, domestic and individual comfort. The falseness and slanderous character of these statements is shown, too, in the fact that thousands composing the membership of our colored churches are orderly and well behaved; that the attendance upon our weekly and Sabbath-schools is a crowded one of diligent and studious children; that success crowns our efforts, constant and wise as they are, in labors connected with our educational and religious advancement; that thrift and

good order mark the life of the colored American since his emancipation, wherever located, in city or rural neighborhood, in the District of Columbia or Louisiana, as a general rule, but, conceding that the negro is ignorant, that there is found in his case a want of intelligent morality, trusted and noticeable, that his progress in the past ten years in education and the cultivation of his manly character has not met the expectations and prophecies of his friends, there is nothing in his condition, conduct or history, to justify such statements. Indeed there is everything to controvert them. Nor am I able to account for the ignorance, publication and indorsement of these shameless falsehoods by the American Missionary Association upon any other supposition than that already indicated, to wit, a desire to bring money to its depleted treasury.

If its appeals in behalf of the negro, whose special interests educational and religious, it claims to have in hand, is to be made in this manner, and at the expense of his good name, it must be the prayer of his real friends, no less than his own, that it cease its labors and expenditures in this regard at once. Such labors and expenditures are altogether too costly for him. Besides, the colored American needs no such moral ownership as this kindred societies, depending upon the liberality of Northern philanthropists and Christians for their support, and the outlays connected with their work, attempt to exercise over him. The white members of such associations, by electing themselves to the profitable and responsible offices connected therewith, and perpetuating their lease of official life through their relations and friends, relieve the object of their sympathy of the pressure of responsibility and the honor due its efficient discharge, and thus weaken him, as an over- affectionate and indulgent father does his son. He protests against the debilitating, though seemingly kind treatment. The opportunity and responsibility thus taken from him he needs to develop his manhood and self-respect.

From the direct statements of the *Independent*, and by previous inference, we can but conclude that it is now the purpose of the American Missionary Association to wield, as far as possible, a sectarian, denominational and proselyting influence to change our Baptist and Methodist churches, those into which most of us were born and baptised, into others whose sole radiation, government, discipline and faith may be measured with the ecclesiastical notaries.

This society proposes, as we understand, to carry on its enterprise in connection with its schools, and with donations made to its treasury by church members and non-church members, liberal and what not, even when made, as in many instances, for educational purposes only.

As this church work advances, what is to become of our church officers, our bishops, our ministers, our other officials of African descent? and what is to become of the church property,

which now owned, bought and paid for, by "dark-lined" members, and for quite a century, in some cases, controlled by their direction? As the members are absorbed, the churches turned from Baptist and Methodist to Congregational, is the property, too, to be absorbed, its title and control lost to us? These are practical and vital questions, and the colored American demands that they be answered in candor and truth. Against such a sectarian, denominational and proselyting endeavor, he raises an earnest and solemn protest. The colored American needs no self-constituted agents traversing the country, parading before the public, in word or print, his moral and religious shortcomings, his educational and pecuniary condition, and asking alms in his name, especially when the commissions charged by such agents are so unmeasured and extravagant, exorbitant even beyond those usual among ordinary brokers.

Restive, because he feels the injustice of these representations, because conscious of his ability to manage his own educational and religious, as well as business affairs, without the assistance of such associations; and, remembering that even in the days of "free negroes" in our country, when a "Freedmen's Bureau" within a "Freedmen's Bank," without colleges and universities, offered by white men, conducted ostensibly in his interest, self-denial, because self-respecting, managing his own affairs when emancipated, and making commendable progress in all those things which pertain to enlightened life. I say began, all this is so, the colored American seeks release from such associations and their self-assumed control of his affairs, and on the fifth of last month declared his independence of them. His departure, his exodus is not from the Republican party, but from such associations.

He goes from ignorance to knowledge, from dependence to self-assertion, from guardianship to that self-control which distinguishes genuine manhood; from penury and mendacity to that competence which, in our land, always crowns the efforts of the intelligent, the industrious and the thrifty.

In thus asserting his individual and personal independence and responsibility, the colored American would not care to cultivate that good neighborhood, nor fail to claim its recognition, acceptance, by mankind as bearing Bible sanction and truth in the Christian maxim: "Whosoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And thus, while he recognizes and admits his dependence on his declaration of independence, making no other declaration than that which accords with the fact that he is but a part of this great people and nation, and only independent in the exalted and proudest sense, as the nation itself is free and sovereign, he would continue to maintain his relations with and foster his allegiance to the Republican party, as long as it conserves our national freedom, property and happiness.

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